

Marisa Monte Celebrates Her Brazilian Culture Through Songwriting

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Marisa Monte live at the Beacon Theater. Photo By Jack Vartoogian/ FrontRowPhotos.

56-year-old four-time Latin Grammy winner Marisa Monte is considered the greatest singer of her generation. With millions of albums sold worldwide, she plays a crucial role in sharing Brazilian culture through her music.

In Brazilian culture, music is often a reflection of identity. Born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Monte blends samba, pop, jazz, and soul to make life-changing songs. Sticking to her Brazilian roots, Monte reflects her culture through the power of sound.

“I’m from a generation that grew up in an already globalized world, impacted by many international influences but very connected to Brazilian tradition. All of this balances out in my work in a particular way,” said Monte, speaking through a translator.

Through songwriting, Monte can integrate different types of music and topics that spark relevance in society. She honors traditions while pushing boundaries and experimenting with new songs. Though this is a difficult process, Monte manages to do this smoothly. “I am inspired by everyday life, by my daily experience, and that of others from whom I learn.”

“I value my references, honor my great masters, and respect those who came first,” she added.

A big tradition in Brazil is the annual celebration of Carnival, which stands as a tradition honoring the history, culture, and traditions of the people. Monte is regularly in attendance, once again bringing attention to the respect she has for her culture and the values that she preaches in her music.



Marisa Monte on a Carnival float in 2012. Picture By Márcia Foletto/ O Globo.

Continuing to practice what she preaches, she also inspires fellow artists to create art advocating for equality. “It is important for those who have a voice, to speak out for those who don't. Fundamental values such as education, culture, health, equality, and equal opportunities for all are universal values that echo in great works,” she said.

This once again represents her music, focusing on love and empathy for all.

Monte’s compassion goes beyond her desire to include her listeners in more meaningful conversations. She centers her passion and creativity in music as a doorway for her fans to connect with her on a deeper level while she’s on stage.

“The desire to communicate with people, to exchange with the world in a poetic way, to honor the gift of singing, for the love for music and the emotion of distributing joy and making many people happy.”

Monte explains she loves to be on stage because it is more authentic to her audience. She takes in the faces she sees in the crowd, she listens to their voices, and she reciprocates the adoration from her fans. “The performances are a moment where the relationship between the public and the artist is more concrete.”

“I love singing on stage, relating to the band and the audience and the feeling that anything can happen. It's honest and real,” she adds.

Her stage presence is beautiful, rocking her audience with flare and grace. Her steps are synchronous and light. She compels her audience with movements in addition to her alluring voice.

In addition, her effort put forth to create a deep connection with her fans also resonates with her bond with nature. “I like to value human symbiosis with the environment through music. Humanity and nature are one thing, we shouldn't talk about nature in the third person, but rather insert ourselves within it.”

In several of Monte's songs, there is a parallel between people and the earth. Specifically in her song "Mamãe Natureza," Monte sings about the search for a spiritual and emotional refuge in nature. This personification displays nature as a mother who welcomes and nurtures, a lyrical piece that captivates her audience.

In accordance with nature, she believes her musical expression is her purpose on this earth. Gaining a fanbase of over 316,000 listeners worldwide, it's clear she makes a major impact on thousands of lives.

"Music has always been a transcendental way of connecting with life and has given me purpose. Music and voice gave me a path as well as affection and partnerships."

In hopes for the youth to fulfill her role in the future, Monte leaves advice for Brazilian musicians who want to follow in her footsteps. "Respect music, be devoted to your creation, respect yourself, love what you do, be brave, be yourself."

Marisa Monte is a successful and highly respected Brazilian artist. Through her stage performance, captivating voice, and compelling lyrics, Monte grasps the hearts of many.